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NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR C. COURVILLE

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#) [ZANU](#) [PF](#)

SUBJECT: CHISSANO BOOSTS MUGABE AT ZANU-PF PARTY CONGRESS

REF: (A) MAPUTO 1533 (B) MAPUTO 1520

Classified By: Ambassador Christopher W. Dell under Section 1.5 b/d

1. (U) In an address to the ruling ZANU-PF's Fourth Party Congress that was broadcast live on Zimbabwe state radio on December 3, Mozambican President Chissano recounted at length the close historical ties between his Frelimo party and ZANU-PF, and stressed in particular Mozambique's support for Zimbabwean land reform. He noted his imminent departure from the Presidency but explicitly distinguished his situation from President Mugabe's. He said he did not believe in term limits and that nobody need follow his example in stepping down. He was leaving the political stage because Mozambique was stable but Zimbabwe was "different," he said without elaborating. He noted that Western leaders often asked him about why his government supported the GOZ but concluded that "democracy forced from the outside will fail, democracy developed from within will prevail."

2. (C) At a state dinner for Chissano on December 3, the Ambassador engaged Chissano Diplomatic Adviser and former Mozambican Ambassador to the United Nations Carlos dos Santos about the situation in Zimbabwe. While giving token acknowledgement of Mugabe's flaws, dos Santos hewed to the line that Zimbabwe's problems are largely due to outside pressure on Mugabe and could easily be resolved if the West, especially the UK and the United States, were willing to compromise. The Ambassador replied that it was specious to blame the outside world for Mugabe's homegrown misgovernance, and challenged dos Santos' assertion that there was no willingness on our side to be flexible toward Zimbabwe. On the contrary, if Mugabe demonstrated real -- as opposed to rhetorical -- commitment to reform and good governance, we would be prepared to respond. The Ambassador urged that, upon his departure from the presidency, Chissano use his elder statesman status to influence Zimbabwean politics constructively and to press Mugabe to take that first step. Dos Santos undertook to raise the point with Chissano.

3. (C) COMMENT: The state media replayed Chissano's public solidarity with Mugabe and ZANU-PF repeatedly. His unalloyed tribute underscored for domestic audiences the continued high stature accorded Mugabe by the region's leaders -- a message particularly important to a party leadership concerned by the high level reception being given opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai in Europe and Africa over the past two weeks.

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(Note: Tsvangirai told the Ambassador December 8 that he plans to visit Washington in late January or early February.)

DELL